

Remarks

The Office Action mailed December 10, 2002 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-7 are now pending in this application. Claims 1-7 stand rejected.

The rejection of Claims 1-7 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hirata (U.S. Patent No. 4,063,054) is respectfully traversed.

Hirata describes a key switch equipped with a contact piece. The contact piece is pressed down by a key top (13) actuated by an external force (such as a finger) thereby closing an electric circuit. A key top (13) is included with a downwardly extending protruding part (14) on the bottom thereof, and engages an elastic element, for example a coil spring (15), that surrounds protruding part (14). The remainder of key top (13) is coupled to a central portion (17) of a first plate spring member (16). A peripheral portion (19) of member (16) is placed on an insulating spacer (20). When key top (13) is depressed, protruding portion (14) enters an opening formed in central portion (17) and depresses a central portion (23) of a second plate spring member (22). Spacer (20) limits an amount of travel of spring member (16).

Claim 1 recites a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, wherein the method comprises the steps of “providing a spacer...providing a biasing member...positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member....”

Hirata neither describes nor suggests a method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor by providing a spacer, providing a biasing member, and positioning the biasing member within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member.

Rather, Hirata does not describe or suggest that the key top extends only around the coiled spring. Specifically, Hirata describes a key top that not only surrounds a coiled spring but also includes a protruding portion that extends at least partially through the coiled spring.

For the reasons set forth above, Claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Hirata.

Claims 2-7 depend, directly or indirectly, from independent Claim 1. When the recitations of Claims 2-7 are considered in combination with the recitations of Claim 1, Applicants submit that dependent Claims 2-7 likewise are patentable over Hirata.

For the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully request that the Section 102 rejection of Claims 1-7 be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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PATENT

Part of #8

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: McGill et al.

Serial No.: 09/681,963

Filed: June 29, 2001

For: METHOD AND APPARATUS
FOR LIMITING MOVEMENT IN
ELECTRICAL CONTACTORS

Art Unit: 3729

Examiner: Kim, Paul

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SUBMISSION OF MARKED UP CLAIMS

Commissioner for Patents
Box AF
Washington, D.C. 20231

In response to the Office Action dated December 10, 2002, please amend the above-identified patent application as follows:

IN THE CLAIMS

(S-1)
1. (twice amended) A method for restricting travel of a moving contact in a lighting contactor, the lighting contactor including the moving contact and a contact carrier, said method comprising the steps of:

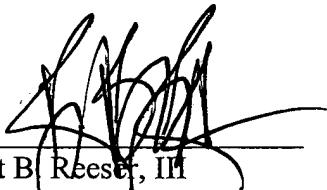
providing a spacer;

providing a biasing member;

positioning the biasing member [through] within the spacer such that the spacer extends only around the biasing member; and

installing the biasing member and the spacer in the contact carrier.

Respectfully Submitted,



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